

REVIEW

Loch, C. S. *Charity and Social Life*. Macmillan & Co.; 1910; 6s. net

No matter what may be one's source of interest in the subject of charity, whether philanthropic feeling inspiring charitable acts, or political interest concerned with the bearing of relief measures upon the good of necessitous classes, or, again, a merely theoretical desire to understand forces operating in social life, one must feel grateful to Dr. Loch for assembling, organising and presenting in book form, his vast knowledge of the evolution of charity and his exposition of principles, to the application of which his life is devoted. The book represents an extension of the matter contained in the article on charity in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which has been since its appearance the standard publication, the only one, so far as my knowledge goes, to which students have had access. The development of charity as an attitude of mind, as a set of practical measures and as a social force, is traced from primitive origins through Greek, Roman and Christian history on to the special measures and institutions exhibited in England since the Reformation. The historical survey is supplemented by a discussion of the principles of charity in operation at the present time and their relation to various aspects of community life, economic, social and religious.

Charity undoubtedly represents the great paradox of civilisation. As an attitude of mind and a practice it is quite central and necessary in the evolution of those characteristics which constitute civilisation. On the other hand it contains the possibility, which has usually been actualised, of the most baneful influences to which a community or state can be subjected, —influences which sap the vital qualities of men and women, thus inducing decay at the very roots of social life. It is, therefore, at once the best and the worst of social processes. The problem is one of method and adjustment, and Dr. Loch's historical survey shows clearly enough that this problem has been the same from the very start. Even primitive and early Greek hospitality had its corresponding term in dependent vagrancy, and from that time to the present charity and dependence have been associated in no small degree.

No place is found in the book to discuss the relation of charity to eugenics, as Dr. Loch's methods of thinking do not associate the two very closely. His great desire to see the dependent restored to independence, and to save the independent from decadence, has kept his attention from the operation of biological forces with which the modern student of human heredity has become familiar. But the eugenist is easily able to supplement the interpretation which Dr. Loch gives to his array of facts. He sees that degenerative influences not only consist in the demolition of character, through relief from the strain of life, but also that some degenerate more easily than others, and that these are through charitable practices given equal opportunity for survival, not only individually, which is unimportant, but with respect to multiplication of numbers through descent. Dr. Loch brings together facts which exhibit in Roman political practices inevitable forces of decay. The eugenist sees in connection with these a population multiplying through several centuries in which no selective agency was operative, unless indeed of a negative kind which eliminated the best in continual foreign and civil struggles. The lesson for modern times which Dr. Loch draws is that charity is now as ever an integral part of social and

ethical life, but that this good may be counterbalanced by irresponsible application. For charity to work good as well as to be good it must be attended by a perpetual scrutiny of methods and ends.

J. W. S

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Hygiene and Morality, by LAVINIA DOCK. (Publishers: G. P. Putnam & Sons. Price 5s. net.)

Hereditary Transmission of Defects in Man, by EDWARD STAINER. (Publishers: Oxford University Press. Price 2s. net.)

Divorce Problems of To-day, by E. S. P. HAYNES. (Published by The Divorce Law Reform Union. Price 1s.)

Evolution and Heredity, by Dr. BERRY HART. (Publishers: Rebman & Co., Ltd. Price 5s. net.)

The Ascending Effort, by GEORGE BOURNE. (Publishers: Constable & Co. Price 4s. 6d. net.)

Hereditary Characters and Their Modes of Transmission, by C. E. WALKER. (Publisher: E. Arnold. Price 8s. 6d. net.)

First Principles of Heredity, by S. HERBERT. (Publishers: A. & C. Black. Price 5s. net.)

The Physiology of Reproduction, by F. H. A. MARSHALL, D.Sc. (Publishers: Longmans, Green. Price 21s. net.)